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## Panel: EPA a burden to Texans

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A trio of Texas energy experts took aim Wednesday at the Environmental Protection Agency during a panel at Texas A&M about energy regulation.

A variety of new rules are going to impact coal production in Texas and will risk many coal generators shutting down because they can't afford the necessary retrofits, said Barry Smitherman, chairman of the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

"In the competitive market, you can't automatically pass that to the consumer," he said to the roughly 70 people at the George Bush Presidential Library. "Now try to explain that to the EPA and some of the decision makers in Washington."

The discussion was held during The Academy of Medicine, Engineering & Science of Texas' 2011 Texas Energy Summit at the on-campus George Bush Presidential Library.

The program brought together Texas leaders from industry, academia and government to explore a trio of issues key to the state's energy landscape: regulation, transportation and electrical power generation.

The featured panel, moderated by Ross Ramsey, managing editor of the *Texas Tribune*, also included Elizabeth Ames Jones, chairman of the Railroad Commission of Texas, and Kathleen Hartnett White, director of the Armstrong Center for Energy and the Environment at the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

White, who has served a six-year term as chairman and commissioner of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, went through a list of 10 EPA rules she was against, including the Clean Air Transport Rule and Cooling Water Intake Rule.

She said the cost of compliance with the rules would be enormous and that they should be the product of better science.

"After 40 years of these major federal environmental laws that have had wonderful benefits and value and success ... there needs to be more rigorous scientific standards," she said.

The day of events also featured recorded opening remarks by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and a keynote address by U.S. Rep. Bill Flores. To promote alternate fuel options, Smitherman drove his electric plug-in Chevy Volt to the event.

TAMEST was founded in 2004 by Hutchison and a pair of Nobel laureates -- Michael Brown and the late Richard Smalley -- to promote Texas' top achievers in medicine, engineering and science, and boost the state's profile in those areas.



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Barry Smitherman, the chairman of the Texas Public Utilities Commission, coils the charging cord at a car-charging station after powering up his electric Chevy Volt (back) in the parking lot at the George Bush Presidential Library on Wednesday. Smitherman and other energy experts attended the 2011 Texas Energy Summit Wednesday.

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- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

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